

# *Vermont State Housing Authority*

*Testimony on H.625  
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*Who we  
are....*

- Vermont State Housing Authority was established in 1968 by the Vermont Legislature to administer affordable housing programs throughout the state of Vermont



# Our Mission

- *The Vermont State Housing Authority's Mission is to promote and expand the supply of affordable rental and homeownership opportunities on a statewide basis. Each new endeavor will enhance or increase the organization's capacity to continue its Mission and assure the effectiveness of VSHA as a provider and administrator of affordable housing programs.*

*Our Mission  
Work*

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*In addition* to ERA programs,  
VSHA touches approximately  
9205 households across  
Vermont

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providing affordable housing  
opportunities and  
approximately \$5.6 million in  
housing assistance each month

# Rental Housing Stabilization Program (RHSP) Overview

July 13, 2020 – March 17, 2021

- Vermont rental home stabilized: 7,614
- Vermont renters assisted: 16,964
- Landlords assisted: 2,479
- Median grant: \$2,071
- \$25 Million in assistance



Vermont Emergency  
Rental Assistance  
Program, VERAP:  
Funded through the  
Federal Consolidated  
Appropriations Act in  
Dec. 2020 and ARPA in  
March 2021. A total of  
\$350 million in funding  
was allocated to  
Vermont. As of Dec.  
31, 2021

- **10,357 Households Served**  
**\$75+ Million in Assistance**
- Total Payments \$75,289,715
- Total Scheduled \$8,610,727
- Total Obligated \$83,900,442

### Rental rates are escalating at historic rates

- Rent increases VERAP approved on average of 14.38%
- Housing Choice Voucher Program
- April 2021 average 7.2%
- April 2022 average 7.6%

### Vermont vacancy rates, on average, are less than 3%;

- Burlington's vacancy rates are less than 1%
- A healthy rental vacancy rate is reported to be 5%

### Housing authority voucher success rates have dipped to a historical low of 30%

- Resulting in hundreds of housing vouchers going unused

*Challenges underscored by the pandemic*



## *Data on rent increases*

- VERAP: Requires approval and supporting documentation
  - 185 rent increases approved (not including publicly regulated housing)
    - Average increase 13.16%, \$103.24/month
      - Low of 1.09% (\$3/month) high of 72.29%(\$300/month)
        - Most increases came from:
          - Burlington/Colchester /S. Burlington
          - Brattleboro
          - St. Albans







# Data on Rent Increases

- Section 8 HCV Program – Rent increases are reviewed and approved, in accordance with program requirements.  
April 2021 average increase 7.2%, \$65/month  
April 2022 average increase 7.6%. \$81/month

*Rent Burdens  
of Voucher  
Participants*

30.01% to 40%	60%
40.01% to 45%	6%
50.01% to 60%	2%
60.01% to 70%	1%
70.01% to 80%	0%
80.01% to 90%	0%
Greater than 90%	1%

# Comments on H. 625

- *Vermont State Housing Authority takes no formal position on H. 625*
  - Sec 2. (3) The requirement that rent increases be approved by VERAP is outside the scope of VSHA's contract with WSD Digital and the Agency of Administration. VSHA is *not supportive* of requiring private landlords receive approval from a third party of rent increase prior to implementation.
    - All publicly funded housing program have restrictions on rent increases
    - Who would take on the burden of this work?
    - Who will enforce compliance
    - Result in greater landlord disengagement at a time more landlord engagement is needed
  - Sec 3. VSHA supports a notice requirement that when a landlord is evicting for nonpayment of rent that they make a *referral* to VERAP
    - Consistent with requirements established by Housing and Urban Development for federally assisted housing programs in November 2021 – this information is provided in the notice to quit.

A stylized sun graphic on the left side of the slide. It features a solid yellow circle representing the sun, with several short, thick yellow dashes above it representing rays. The sun is partially obscured by a large white semi-circle that frames the text on the right.

Too late in the program  
for this legislation to be  
impactful

Hundreds of Vermonters have exhausted benefits allowed  
by VERAP



Thank you!

*Looking forward to more conversation.*